

March 5, 2020

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Determine that the project is within the scope of the previously-certified Downtown Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (SCH#2009071006) and warrants no further environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162; and

Approve Site Plan Review SPR19-023 for the construction of a new five-level above-grade parking garage for the City of Long Beach Civic Center and Public Safety complex, with approximately 297 parking stalls for employee and City vehicles, and an approximate floor area of 104,467 square feet, located at 115 Chestnut Avenue, in the Downtown Plan (PD-30) Planned Development District, at the site of the Police Department rear parking lot between the Police Headquarters building and City Hall. (District 2)

APPLICANT: Eric Lopez for
the City of Long Beach Department of Public Works
411 W. Ocean Blvd., 4th floor
Long Beach, CA 90802
(Application No. 1908-42)

DISCUSSION

The site is located at 115 Chestnut Avenue, on an approximately 1-acre site between the new City Hall and the Police Headquarters building (Exhibit A – Vicinity Map). The site is bounded by Chestnut Avenue on the east, the new City Hall and Civic Center to the south, Fire Station No. 1 and Magnolia Avenue to the west, and the Police Headquarters building to the north. The eastern half of the site currently is used as a surface parking lot for the Police Department, primarily serving as parking for official police vehicles. Beneath this parking lot, approximately 30 feet below grade, is the remains of the police tunnel that connected the police station's jail facility with the former Los Angeles County Superior Courthouse located at 415 W. Ocean Blvd., since demolished and replaced by the new Civic Center. The western half of the site contains a gate and guard shack, and a fueling station for Police and Fire Department vehicles. The fueling station has two underground storage tanks for diesel fuel and one for gasoline. West of the fueling station, the site also contains a parking area used by Police and Fire vehicles, an electrical transformer, a light standard, two trees, bollards, and an enclosure for a



former compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling station, the tanks and pumps for which were removed prior.

The applicant, which is the Department of Public Works, proposes to clear the project location of existing improvements, excavate and demolish the former Police tunnel, backfill the excavation, and construct a new five-level parking structure on the eastern half of the site, the portion currently used as police vehicle parking (Exhibit B – Plans). The western half of the site will be improved by creating a 40-foot-clear drive aisle with sixteen (16) ninety-degree parking stalls. Drive access is currently obstructed by the CNG pad, transformer, and bollards, and the creation of a clear drive aisle will allow easier access to the fueling station for City vehicles and fuel trucks, as well as fire apparatus turnaround and parking for Fire Station No. 1.

The proposed five-level, 47-foot-tall parking structure, which will be used to park official police vehicles and employee vehicles, contains a total of 297 parking stalls. The table below summarizes the parking stall count by level and the total. The parking structure will have its main vehicular entrance and exit on Chestnut Avenue, with a secondary exit on the west side of the structure leading to Magnolia Ave. Secured pedestrian access will be provided on the Chestnut Avenue frontage, as well as a pedestrian entrance leading directly to the “patio” area at the rear of the Police Headquarters building, which is the main building entrance for employees. The structure will have two stair towers, one at the southeast corner on the Chestnut Avenue elevation, and one at the northwest corner. The parking structure will be entirely above grade and has no subterranean or semi-subterranean areas. From grade to the highest structure elements, the tops of the stair towers, the structure will measure approximately 47 feet tall.

Table 1: Parking Summary

| | Storage Vehicles | ADA | EV | Employee Standard | Employee Compact | Loading | |
|----|------------------|-----|----|-------------------|------------------|---------|-----|
| L1 | 60 | 2 | 3 | - | - | 2 | |
| L2 | 60 | - | 8 | - | - | - | |
| L3 | 62 | - | 8 | - | - | - | |
| L4 | 62 | - | 8 | - | - | - | |
| L5 | 2 | - | - | 16 | 4 | - | |
| | 246 | 2 | 27 | 16 | 4 | 2 | 297 |

This structure will be an accessory to the Police Headquarters building and Fire Station No. 1 and will be located on the same parcel as these buildings. It will not be used as a public parking structure or have any other commercial purpose; it will be used strictly for storage of City vehicles and City employee parking. The parking garage is therefore not considered a principal land use and is not subject to a Conditional Use Permit, as would be required for a commercial parking structure.

The Downtown Plan requires a zero-foot build-to line on Chestnut Avenue, with up to 20% of the building frontage allowed to be set back no more than five feet (5'). The parking structure provides 70% of its frontage at the build-to line, with the remaining 30% set back approximately

fifteen feet (15') due to the design requirements of a parking structure, which generally must have notched-out corners with the approximate dimensions of two parking stalls at each corner, to avoid constructing floor area that is unusable for parking stalls or drive aisles. These notched-out areas will be used for landscaping on the north, and the structure's southeast stair tower on the south. The Downtown Plan allows the Site Plan Review Committee to consider context-sensitive setbacks deviating from the build-to requirement if the intent of the Downtown Plan is met. In this case, such determination has been made by the Site Plan Review Committee.

The Downtown Plan requires parking structures to be architecturally treated on exposed elevations and encourages the remainder of the structure to be wrapped with other building uses, or otherwise largely hidden from view. The elevation on Chestnut Avenue, and potentially the portion of the north elevation that extends eastward beyond the Police Headquarters building and the portion of the south elevation nearest Chestnut Avenue, will receive an architectural treatment that is under development, and is incorporated as a condition of approval. This may include a custom art piece covering most of the elevation, or an architectural product or custom architectural design to provide an enhanced elevation facing the public viewshed. The remainder of the parking structure is planned to be open and untreated; however, it is surrounded by the Police Headquarters building, Fire Station No. 1, and City Hall; the untreated elevations largely will not be visible from the public viewshed, in compliance with the design guidelines of the Downtown Plan.

Staff has found the proposal, as conditioned, to be in compliance overall with the development standards and design guidelines of the Downtown Plan and has documented this in written findings of fact (Exhibit C – Findings). Staff also has included conditions of approval to ensure that the final architectural treatment receive additional review by the Site Plan Review Committee prior to implementation to ensure a high-quality design (Exhibit D – Conditions of Approval). Staff therefore recommends that the Planning Commission approve the requested Site Plan Review, subject to conditions.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A 1/8th page notice of public hearing was published in the Long Beach Press-Telegram on February 20, 2020, in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 21.21 of the Long Beach Municipal Code. No public comments were received at the time the report was prepared.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines, this project was analyzed as part of the previously-certified Downtown Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (SCH#2009071006) (Exhibit E – Downtown Plan PEIR). A CEQA compliance checklist was prepared for this project. The checklist determined that the project will not result in any new significant impacts or any increased significant that exceed those analyzed in the Downtown Plan PEIR, with mitigation measures incorporated (Exhibit F – Program EIR Compliance Checklist PECC-03-19). The development is subject to the Downtown Plan PEIR Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), which is attached to the checklist. The MMRP is designed to ensure compliance with adopted mitigation measures during project. For each mitigation measure recommended in the PEIR that applies to the applicant's proposal, specifications are made in the MMRP that identify the action required and the monitoring that must occur. The party responsible for verifying compliance with individual mitigation measures is identified in the MMRP as well.

Respectfully submitted,



SCOTT KINSEY, AICP
PROJECT PLANNER



ALEXIS OROPEZA
CURRENT PLANNING OFFICER



CHRISTOPHER KOONTZ, AICP
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER



LINDA F. TATUM, FAICP
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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Attachments:

- Exhibit A – Vicinity Map
- Exhibit B – Plans
- Exhibit C – Findings
- Exhibit D – Conditions of Approval
- Exhibit E – Downtown Plan PEIR
- Exhibit F – Program EIR Compliance Checklist PECC-03-19